

Welcome Maiden's New Town Manager



Written by Gina Lindsey (O-N-E Staff Reporter)

The weight has been lifted from Maiden's Interim Town Manager Kevin Sanders as the council welcomes a new manager into their midst.

"I appreciate the opportunity to be part of the leadership team here," Smith said. "I will do the very best that I can. I will certainly have an open door policy. I think the (Maiden Town Council) has done a great job and I hope to continue that."

Steve Smith will relocate from Eden in Caswell County. He said Maiden is slightly larger than places he has lived and worked in the past.

According to the 2005 US Census, Yanceyville has a population of 2,147 and Stoneville has 988 residents. In Maiden, he will serve about 3,264 people.

Smith has served in local government for more than 20 years. He started as a town administrator in Stoneville and then served Rockingham County as its first county planner. In Yanceyville, he worked as town clerk, and until last month, he served as its town manager.

On May 24, it was reported that Smith was fired from his job as town manager "due to recent management deficiencies and failure to comply with existing town policies and standards."

Maiden Mayor Bob Smyre said he was aware of the situation and he thinks Smith is going to make a "fine town manager."

"I guess with the political climate and the policies in place, they felt like it was a time for change," Smith said.

He applied for the town manager's position in Maiden during the second week of May. Maiden has several aspects that appealed to him, one of which was the rural setting.

"It's typical rural North Carolina in the fact that everyone is faith-based, family-based and they hold traditional values," Smith said. "They support local education and local merchants...it's a broad representation of what rural North Carolina is."

Smith was informed a week ago that he was a finalist for the position, and he was asked if he would attend the council meeting on June 11. He said they went into closed session and discussed personnel issues. Upon reopening the session, Smith said the Maiden Town Council elected him town manager. The council set his salary at \$54,000.

Smith is excited about starting his duties as town manager on July 1.

"I think I'm most looking forward to the council setting a direction for growth," he said. "I think the combination of established plans for growth and utilizing the position of planner—I think that's one of the things I would like to see...the game plan so to speak."

Smith said that Maiden has a lot of possibilities as far as growth.

"Maiden has a lot of opportunities for development," he said. "It is not unlike other rural towns. It's transitioning from a textile economy to become more diversified. They have the basic building blocks in place to have some positive growth."

On Tuesday, Smith walked through the streets of Maiden and attempted to familiarize himself with the community and get to know the people. He said he plans to play a strong role in the community.

"I think 95 percent of being a town manager is being involved with the people and being involved in the community.

Maiden has been searching for a new town manager since February when Todd Clark left to become the new town manager for Newton. In the mean time, Kevin Sanders has been holding down the fort, so to speak, performing his duties as administrative assistant to the town manager and the town manager's responsibilities.

Smith will return to Maiden later in the week to finalize housing plans. He is looking for a small place in Maiden to call home for the time being.

His family will follow in about a year. His wife, Rita will remain in Eden for the next year while their son, Corey completes his final year at Morehead High School. Smith also has a daughter, Stacey Martin, who lives with her husband, Todd, and their son, Will, in Burlington.